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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Hisham ELZIMAITY (Egypt)

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Section 21. Human rights

1. At its 22nd and 23rd meetings, on 1 June 1995, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 21, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

Discussion

2. Many delegations supported the proposed programme of work and the proposed increases in resources. Many other delegations felt that the increase proposed was inadequate and more resources were needed in general in this important field and in order to reflect the expansion of activities following the World Conference on Human Rights. Many delegations regretted that priority areas in the economic and social sectors had not received similar proposals for increases, while recognizing the importance of the activities in the field of human rights, and expressed their concern at the increase in resources proposed for this sector. Other delegations expressed their concern that technical advisory assistance operations might not be adequately funded.

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3. A number of delegations questioned the legislative basis for the budget proposal as contained in section 21, since the revisions to programme 35 and section 21, of the revised budget estimates of the 1994-1995 programme budget had not been approved by the General Assembly. Other delegations pointed out that the legislative mandate for the budget proposal was derived from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Assembly.

4. Some delegations questioned the proposed level of resources under subprogrammes 2 and 4, and felt that the resources should be more equally distributed among subprogrammes. Some delegations expressed concern about the lower level of resources allocated to subprogramme 2 from the regular budget in relation to the higher level from extrabudgetary resources and underlined, in particular, that insufficient resources had been allocated to implement the goals and objectives of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/228 of 23 December 1993. Other delegations welcomed the emphasis on subprogramme 1, which had been designated high priority by the Assembly, and expressed the hope that the activities envisaged under subprogramme 4 would draw fully on expertise existing elsewhere, including outside the United Nations system.

5. Many delegations considered that the programme of work regarding the integration of human rights concerns into economic and social development activities was not legislatively mandated. Many delegations expressed the view that the programme had been mandated by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. 1/

6. Many delegations noted that, despite being emphasized in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the activities regarding the right to development were not adequately reflected in the proposed programme of work and that the right to development should, in accordance with resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, be addressed in a separate subprogramme. In that context, they insisted that programme 35 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised, 2/ should be redrafted to provide an effective programmatic follow-up of the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development as part of the efforts to implement the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Many other delegations felt that the issue had been adequately addressed under the relevant subprogrammes, in the same manner as other individual human rights, none of which could or should be confined to a single subprogramme.

7. Many delegations felt that the responsibilities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and those of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights were well defined and mutually reinforcing. Some delegations opined that the respective responsibilities and mandates of the two senior officials should be further reviewed and clarified.

8. A number of delegations considered that the ongoing restructuring of the programme and the reorganization of the Centre for Human Rights were useful and effective, and were in line with the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as reflected in its report (A/49/892, annex). Other delegations felt that those actions were not sufficient and that much remained to be done to increase efficiency and to eliminate any duplication or

overlapping of activities. They further emphasized the need for the expeditious implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights.

9. Many delegations emphasized that the activities in the field of human rights, including the right to development, should be for the well-being of all humankind and that an integrated approach should be developed to guarantee balanced attention to human rights, on the basis of the principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity, as set out in paragraph 31 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. They emphasized that the programme narrative did not refer to all the relevant mandates and omitted a number of important issues contained in the Vienna Declaration, in particular in the area of economic and social rights. They stressed that the different proposals and ideas reflected in section 21, particularly in paragraphs 21.2, 21.6, 21.23 and 21.27 (b) and (c), should be redrafted to reflect the mandates, letter and spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

10. Other delegations insisted that the budget proposals correctly sought to implement the whole Vienna Declaration and all other mandates. They disagreed with attempts to pick and choose between mandates and were of the opinion that the budget proposals should therefore be approved in their entirety.

11. Some delegations reiterated their strong support for the establishment of a comprehensive programme in order to help Member States in strengthening the institutions of the rule of law as contained in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and General Assembly resolutions 48/132 of 20 December 1993 and 49/194 of 23 December 1994. Those delegations emphasized that adequate resources should be allocated for the programme.

12. Delegations welcomed the inclusion in the programme of work of the legislative mandates approved since 1992. Several delegations expressed regret that the revisions proposed in 1994 to programme 35 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 were still under review by the General Assembly and could not provide the framework for section 21.

13. Many delegations supported the proposed conversion of posts, noting that for the most part they did not amount to additional human resources and that the regularization of the posts would have a beneficial impact on morale and efficiency at the Centre for Human Rights. Many other delegations felt that the 21 new posts approved as temporary by the General Assembly in section III of its resolution 49/219 of 23 December 1994 should not be proposed for conversion into established posts until the Advisory Committee on Budgetary Questions had commented further.

14. Many delegations stressed that the resources for the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families should have been redeployed to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights instead of being surrendered. Some delegations expressed concern about the lack of clarity on the resources that should be allocated to the promotion of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/175 of 23 December 1994.

15. Some delegations emphasized the need to improve the coordination of activities in the field of human rights undertaken by different entities of the Organization.

Conclusion and recommendations

16. The Committee was unable to reach agreement on a recommendation to the General Assembly that it approve the programme narrative of section 21, Human rights. It therefore recommended to the Assembly that, when considering the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, it review the programme narrative of section 21, paying due attention to the observations in paragraphs 2 to 15 above.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (part I)), chap. III.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 and corrigendum (A/47/6/Rev.1), vols. I and II.